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Sen. Stephen M. Young

Senator Puts His Foot in CIA's Face

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WASHINGTON.

The CIA and the state department went into an uproar yesterday when a news service reported Sen. Stephen Young as saying that he had been told the intelligence agency had committed atrocities in Viet Nam to discredit the Communist Viet Cong guerrillas.

But the 7-year-old Ohio Democrat told the Herald Tribune: "I did not say that."

His purported statement brought an immediate denial from the usually-silent CIA — "absolutely false," a spokesman protested. And there was deep distress among State Department officials who feared his reported remarks would have disastrous repercussions abroad.

Their reactions stemmed from an associated press dispatch quoting Sen. Young as saying that a CIA agent in Viet Nam told him the CIA had committed atrocities there to underscore the Viet Cong guerrillas' reputation for cruelty.

Asked about the report, Sen. Young modified it considerably.

He told the Herald Tribune that "a man who claimed to be working for the CIA" in Viet Nam alleged that the intelligence agency had hired some South Vietnamese to masquerade as Viet Cong, adding:

"It was alleged to me that several of these executed two village leaders and raped some women."

In an elaboration of the remarks attributed earlier to him, the Senator indicated at one point he believed a group of the purported masqueraders had committed the alleged atrocities.

But he added "I still don't know, I don't believe such an incident occurred, but I could see how it could have occurred."

The Senator said he exclaimed "I can't believe that" when the purported CIA agent told him of the alleged atrocities.

And he said on returning to Washington from South Viet Nam he had asked CIA about the purported incident and had been told the intelligence agency "would not sanction that."

"CIA has employed some South Vietnamese and they have been instructed to claim they are Viet Cong and to work accordingly," the Senator said, "but of course no one could tell me any American instructed anyone to perpetrate outrages."

It is unknown if the Senator's elaboration will ever catch up with the remarks credited earlier to him.

A CIA spokesman said "as far as our agents having done such things (committed atrocities), the statement is absolutely false."

Several State Department officials bewailed the Senators' reported remarks as "irresponsible," and predicted gloomily they would be brandished by Communists around the world as evidence that the U. S. is engaging in atrocities in Viet Nam.

Rep. Cornelius B. Gallagher, D. N. J., said Sen. Young's purported statement was "appalling and reflects a carelessness with facts."

Although he later diluted considerably the import of the remarks attributed to him, Sen. Young was steadfast in his opposition to CIA's employment of South Vietnamese to pose as Viet Cong guerrillas.

"I know such men have been employed, and I question the wisdom of that," he told the Herald Tribune, adding:

"If that is done, it might be that one or several of those fellows, on their own, if they thought they were suspect, in order to prove their ferocity and cruelty as Viet Cong, might perpetrate something."